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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [RS](#) [GG](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: MARGELOV REFLECTS ON MEDVEDEV - PUTIN
RELATIONSHIP; OFFERS VIEWS ON UKRAINE AND GEORGIA

Classified By: Pol M/C Alice G. Wells. Reason: 1.4 (b).

¶1. (C) Summary: Federation Council Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Mikhail Margelov assured EUR DAS David Merkel June 18 that the GOR's unhappiness over Abkhazia was at bottom economic and that any friction would abate as the Sochi Olympics approached." Margelov comments on Iran were similarly bottom line: "even Zhirinovskiy does not want Teheran to go nuclear," he said in promising Russian cooperation with the U.S. Margelov thought that Medvedev's suggestion, during his June 5 visit to Berlin, of a European security arrangement, had been "born in the MFA," and had been designed to prompt discussion of a new security architecture. He planned to have his Committee in closed session in July hold discussions of its own on what such an arrangement might look like. While acknowledging that the Russian "eagle has two heads," Margelov thought that Medvedev, whom he described as "no puppet," would soon be unarguably in charge. End summary.

No Russian Politician Wants
A Nuclear Iran

¶2. (C) Federation Council Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Mikhail Margelov on June 18 sidestepped expressions of concern about continued equipment transfers to Iran by repeatedly assuring EUR DAS David Merkel that "no one Russian, even (national political gadfly Vladimir) Zhirinovskiy wants Teheran to go nuclear." Margelov cited earlier GOR decisions to postpone deliveries to Bushehr in attempting to convince DAS Merkel that Russia remained willing to sideline its commercial interests and join international efforts to pressure Iran. DAS Merkel also pointed out concern over conventional transfers to Iran and that Margelov should use his understanding of the U.S. Congress to express to GOR how the 123 Agreement would be impacted by future transfers.

MAP for Ukraine Will Strengthen
Hand of Those Opposed to West

¶3. (C) Margelov told DAS Merkel that he had just met with Henry Kissinger, who was "opposed to offering NATO membership to former republics of the Soviet Union." Margelov thought that the offer of a MAP to Ukraine would only strengthen the hand of the estimated 60 - 70 percent of the Russian population that remained somewhat agnostic about the West. A MAP offer to Georgia would "not be that painful," Margelov thought.

¶4. (C) Underlying and partially explaining some of Russia's anxiety about a MAP for Ukraine were economic factors, Margelov thought. Russia was indifferent to the involvement of France or Finland in NATO because bilateral economic relations were sound. Yuliya Tymoshenko's occasional comments about re-privatization caused uncertainty in some

Russian circles, and in NATO increased questions about Ukraine's economic future and Russia's participation in it.

Saakashvili Losing Credibility

¶15. (C) To DAS Merkel's comment about reports of a good initial meeting between Medvedev and Saakashvili at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum, Margelov replied only that Saakashvili had lost much credibility among many in Georgia. Margelov worried that Saakashvili might "do something stupid" if he felt that Abkhazia was "slipping away." Margelov posited that if Saakashvili were to find a "common economic language" with the Abkhazian representatives much of the tension would evaporate. The GOR's only concern at the moment, he said, was that it have a peaceful border with Abkhazia at the time of the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Medvedev No Puppet

¶16. (C) Margelov spoke at length about President Medvedev. While agreeing that the Russian "eagle has two heads," and that it was likely that even Putin and Medvedev were not certain how their relationship would clarify, Margelov expected Medvedev to, over time, be fully in charge. Margelov described Medvedev as "smart," and "no puppet." Medvedev was a "student, who had learned much from his teachers" and from the "dean of the faculty (Putin)." Putin did not want Medvedev to be held hostage by "Putin's inner circle," and Putin, to that end, was working hard to ensure Medvedev's independence.

¶17. (C) It would take time for Medvedev to become conversant in international affairs, and during that transitional period, Putin would speak frequently about international issues, and would have meetings with key international figures. Putin, Margelov said, "does not want to be in charge of national security," and would gradually cede ground to Medvedev.

¶18. (C) Margelov had traveled with Medvedev to Berlin on June 15. In his telling, the Germans were impressed that Medvedev's delegation was small and focused. With the President had been Foreign Minister Lavrov, Presidential Administration Foreign Affairs Advisor Prikhodko, the Russian Ambassador to Germany, and Margelov, accompanied by fewer bodyguards, less staff, and fewer press. German Foreign Affairs Council member Alexander Rahr had told Margelov that Medvedev had said the right things, but that the Germans would match his words to his deeds over the next one hundred days. Margelov had passed Rahr's comments to Medvedev.

¶19. (C) Margelov agreed with DAS Merkel that Medvedev had not yet devised a plan for tackling corruption, and guessed that the composition of Medvedev's anti-corruption team would give observers a clue as to the President's seriousness. He saw hope in that fact that the new cabinet had little overlap between ministerial portfolios and the personal business interests of the ministers, as had been the case with ministers like Reyman in the preceding cabinet. Margelov predicted that Minister of Agriculture Gordeyev would soon leave the government.

¶10. (C) Margelov described Medvedev's allusion in Berlin to the need for a European security structure as an MFA concoction. The intention, he said, was to stimulate a discussion about the new architecture of European security. Margelov told DAS Merkel that he planned to convene a closed session of his Committee in July to explore the idea, but he was not certain what might emerge from the session, or from the fact that Medvedev had floated the idea in Berlin.

¶11. (U) Message cleared by DAS Merkel.
RUSSELL